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When properly placed and in working order, Mr. Mackaye intends his chairs to be comfortable; to afford a rest for the feet, a hook for the hat and a rack for the cane or umbrella, and to fold up and swing round, so as to form an aisle between every two rows of seats. At the Union Square, on the contrary, they were exquisitely uncomfortable; they broke down, and they obstructed the passage of the audience. These were obviously the faults of the theatre, not of the chairs; but, as the theatre cannot be taken away, and the chairs may be removed, I venture to predict that Mr. Mackaye will again be the victim of circumstances.

As to the play, it begins with three preliminary acts, and then wanders into the Polar regions and a foolish imitation of "The Frozen Deep," by Wilkie Collins. The intention is to show how a man's purposes of vengeance may be frustrated by Providence. The hero starts out to kill the villain, and, being left alone on an island of snow, longs for the society of the bad man, whom he has pushed overboard. This is intended to be very pathetic; but, in the play, it becomes very amusing, not to say ridiculous.

I will try to boil the piece down into a paragraph. Act I: the *Orchardsons* and *Christiansons* have a family feud; but *Dick Orchardson* comes a-courting *Kate Christianson* and *Kate's* brother, *Christian*, falls in love with *Priscilla*, whom *Dick* is destined to marry. Act II: *Christian* discovers that *Dick* has seduced *Kate* and gone on a voyage with *Priscilla*; so he swears to follow and kill *Dick*. Act III: the parties meet on shipboard; *Christian* is locked up for threatening to murder *Dick*, who then sets fire to the ship, and an iceberg crushes all concerned. Act IV: *Christian* and *Dick* have a fight on the ice; *Dick* is pushed overboard and both float away. Act V: *Christian* is on a desolate island; *Dick* appears and begs for fire and food; the ice breaks and both float away again. Act VI: *Dick* returns home and marries *Kate*, and *Christian* turns up in time to wed *Priscilla*. Upon my word, this is the whole six-act story, which differs in dénouement from the novel.

Before these lines are printed, Edwin Booth will be drawing all New York to the Star Theatre around the corner, and the Union Square will be glad to change its bill in the hope of catching some of Booth's overflow.

STEPHEN FISKE.

#### TWO PICTURE EXHIBITIONS.

THE artists who masquerade in the yearly exhibitions of the jovial fellowship which calls itself the Salmagundi Club, are at no little disadvantage in this livery of black-and-white which they have decreed to wear, for if it does not actually confound their identity it seriously disguises it. Had all the men who have contributed to this exhibition worked upon these same themes in color, instead of in black-and-white, the difference between their methods as artists would have been easily perceived; but as it is, the most striking feature of the exhibition, so far, at least, as the landscapes are concerned, is the family likeness that seems to run through them—a likeness that it must be confessed does not wholly disappear on a closer examination. Ever since Mr. J. F. Murphy shunted off from the track which Corot had laid down through the wood of Arcady, he has led in his train a number of younger spirits who, had they been artists of as much force as he, would have themselves been leaders in the same or in some other direction. Probably it would have been in the same direction, for of all the landscape painters of our time Corot is the one who has had the strongest fascination for the rising generation.

But, however this may be, it is plain enough that Mr. Murphy is Corot's son by adoption, and that Messrs. C. H. Eaton, Melville Dewey, A. V. Dodshun, W. Lathrop, with two or three others, less important, are Corot's grandchildren, with Mr. Murphy for father. In other words, none of these men has an individual method, or gives any sign of having looked at nature through his own eyes, and it is easy to believe that such work as they show us might all of it have been done in the studio without any direct reference to nature beyond a few hasty memoranda of leading lines. This is not to deny the cleverness of these men. Some may think it proves them to be very clever indeed. All we say for our part, is, that to our mind such work is of almost no interest.

And there is another serious criticism to be made.

If the visitor will look at the two frames of sketches by G. H. Smillie, he may sneer, with the younger fellows, at the old-fashioned, cut-and-dried drawing-school methods of the artist bringing back to old stagers the Huberts, Calames, and Hardings who made the "flats" from which they used to study. But, although Mr. Smillie, clever and dexterous as he is in the use of his short-hand, wearies us with a conventionality which is wholly out of fashion, it may be wise for the band of beardless scoffers to meditate on the prophecy that in a few short years, if they keep on working after the recipes now in fashion, they will become as antiquated as Mr. Smillie himself, and perhaps will be looked upon by the critics of the new generation as not half so clever. It is plain, too, that the increasing demand, by our publishers, for "illustrations" for their books and magazines, a field to which so many of our younger artists are turning as a source of income, is affecting their practice as makers of pictures. The greater part of the landscapes in this collection look as if they had been made to be engraved on wood. Many of them are treated as if they were to be served up as vignettes, and while we are bound to remember that they present themselves as the work of a sketch-club, yet just what we complain of is that the sketches themselves, from which pictures are presumably to be made, are the result of processes which it is not unjust to call processes of manufacture.

No one, however, will deny that here are the evidences of much technical cleverness: the only thing to be regretted is that so few of these clever men should have been able to strike out a path for himself. Who can deny that, had Mr. Murphy gone out into the field and woods, here at home, and translated what he saw into his own words, we should have had to chronicle a distinct gain to our landscape art? As it is the title of Mr. Murphy's book must be, "Nature: a Series of Essays Translated from the French of Corot." But, of course, Mr. Murphy is not the only one of whom this may be said. Since Whistler took his cue from Fortuny, we have a whole tribe of Americans singing a refrain to Mr. Whistler's song, and it is now difficult to distinguish between Mr. Blum, Mr. Pennell, Mr. Duveneck, and Mr. Packer; though it must be said that Mr. Duveneck's etchings in this exhibition mark the low-water mark in the line of "Sketches of Venice," and show this artist, from whom so much was once expected, in a most disappointing light; his brilliant sun we hope, however, is only under a cloud. Mr. Pennell's sketches are very coarse and unimaginative, and make us regret the absence of Mr. Blum's drawings, which have so abounded in late exhibitions, and which, if they were imitations, were imitations done with a delicate and sympathetic hand. Mr. C. Graham's "New York City" tries to make a sky-line for our bedevilled city that shall show better than the one she has, but with all praise to the artist's good intention he cannot be said to have succeeded in making an omelette without eggs. The sky-line is ugly beyond redemption. To help it out Mr. Graham has given Trinity Church spire a prominence it has long lost. Mr. Edwards, Mr. Gregory, and Mr. Burleigh all show clever work, albeit somewhat more of originality could be wished. The best figure-piece in the exhibition is Mr. Percy Moran's "Sisters." This is an honest little drawing, which does the artist equal credit as a study from life and as a proof of skill.

Although the present Brooklyn Art Association Exhibition makes no pretensions to be representative of American art, yet it is, for all that, fairly representative of the tendencies of art in this country. Lack of poetic feeling, lack of sentiment, lack of technical skill—these are deficiencies that force themselves upon us as we study any collection of pictures distinctively American. Another lack as serious, though, in truth, it belongs to the same category, is the want of taste in many of our American pictures. Take, for instance, W. M. Brown's "Peaches and Vase," in the Brooklyn Exhibition. Here the peaches are painted with the utmost care and skill: as mere imitation of texture they could not be better, but what a composition is this, what a discord of color, what ugly forms, what a stiff arrangement! In the background, against a hard "leather" wall-paper are ranged a cup and saucer, a vase, and a glass decanter; in front of these incongruous objects on a fruit-napkin of the crudest green, are set a half dozen peaches, and we are asked to accept this as a "picture," because of the

skill with which the peaches are painted, forgetting that a "picture" must be a whole, and that even a slight subject like this must be as carefully thought out as a little poem, to deserve acceptance. The artist is so evidently a painstaking and conscientious workman, that we venture to ask him whether he has ever seen a picture of still-life by Villon or by Philippe Rousseau. Why cannot he learn, like them, to put his apples of gold in pictures of silver? But Mr. Brown is not alone in his want of taste; C. P. Ream in his "Cup of Raspberries" and J. Decker in his "Fruit," show as little power as he to hitch their wagon to Beauty's star. Mr. Ream's white china cup would spoil any picture. Mr. Decker's "Fruit" is merely so many square feet of pear tree seen through an upright frame.

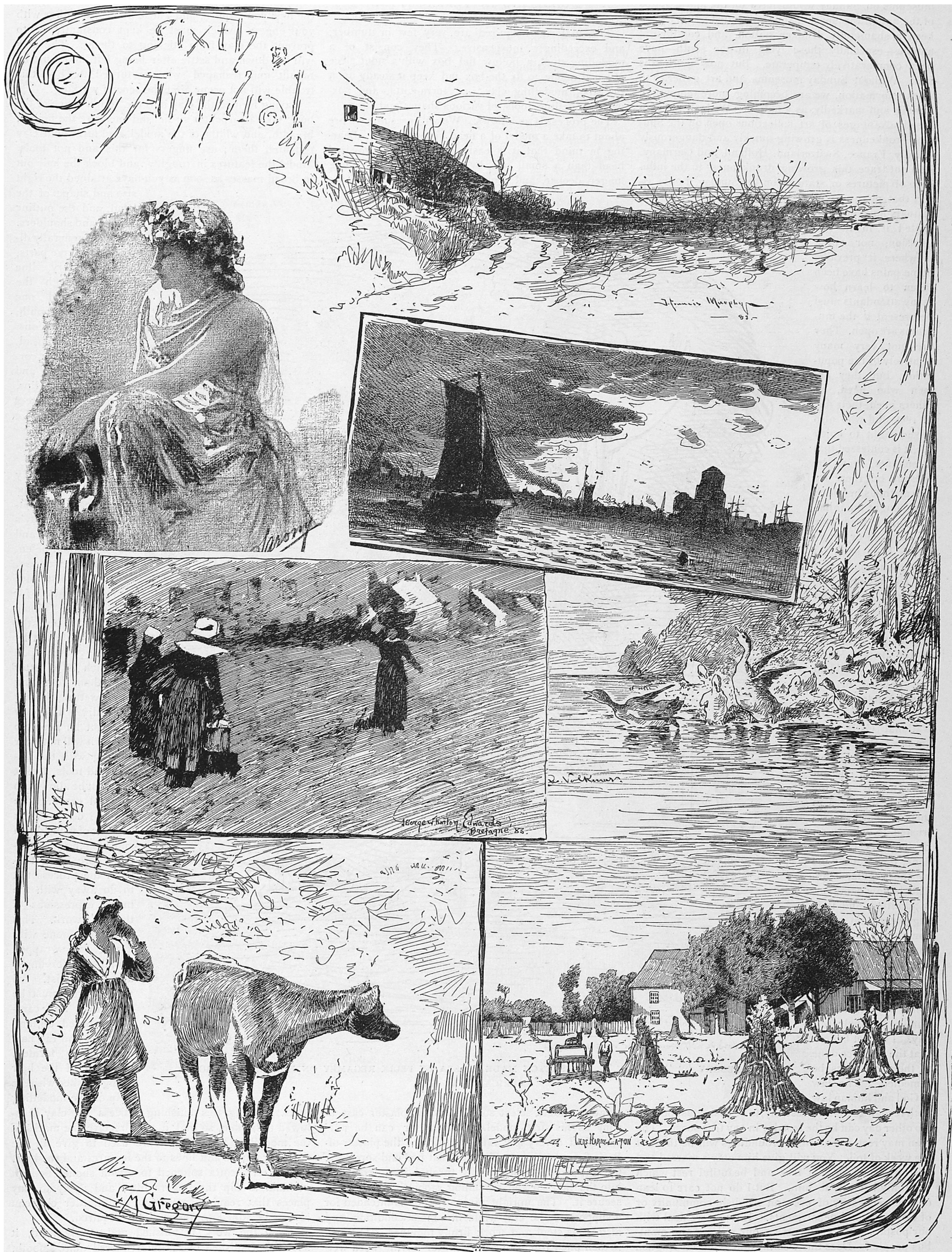
The portraits in the exhibition are few and indifferent. Oliver J. Lay takes too much the same view of human beings that Mr. Ream does of raspberries—that they are all outside. And this outside he paints with great pains, and now and then surprises us with a suspicion that at some time or other his subject may have been alive; that if you pricked it, it would bleed, and that if you tickled it, it might laugh. On this occasion he has not been so fortunate. Benoni Irwin shines in the comparison, and Mr. Irwin is not used to shining. Yet his picture of a lady knitting has some look of life in it and some naturalness of pose.

The figure subjects of the exhibition are the weakest. Mr. Loop in his "Awakening," shows plainly enough that neither the true classic art nor the art of the Renaissance has taken any real hold of his mind. As for Mr. Schuchard we sincerely wish that he would take seriously to study in some place where he would be safe from the dangers of silly admiration. He has a vein of sentiment in him, almost a trickling spring of poetry, but what to do with it he is sadly at a loss, and he seems too indolent to study to give his vague ideas a substantial form. C. Y. Turner, having had a success of a season with a sad-eyed widow and her little girl on a churchyard stile in the gloaming, is bent on melancholy as a good paying investment, and sets one sad maiden at picking up driftwood and another at looking out at window into the gathering twilight, but both of them with the air of models obeying orders, and quite ready, if some one were to pull joviality in the picture market, to dance or sing with the merriest. The unreality of Mr. Turner's art is shown by his large picture called "The Armor," in which a New York model stripped to the waist and seated amid the incongruous "properties" of a New York studio, is doing duty over again for the hundredth time as Fortuny's Arab, but with not a spark of Fortuny's authentic fire.

Landscape is the only field in which American artists have shown the ability to mark out an independent path. And the Brooklyn exhibition is manifestly inadequate as a representative of American effort in this direction, although artists like Mr. Hubbard and Mr. Bristol send pictures as good as they are in the habit of painting. But though there are names of merit in the catalogue—Bolmer and Parton, Crane and Dewey, Harry Chase and Quartley, and a score of others—from few of them do we get what might have been hoped for. The burden of the exhibition falls upon shoulders not generally called upon to bear such a responsibility, and Carleton Wiggins and G. H. McCord carry off unaccustomed laurels. Mr. Wiggins's "Landscape with Sheep" is one of the best he has painted, and Mr. McCord's "In Morris County, New Jersey," would attract the eye anywhere. Kenyon Cox's "Summer Evening" is well enough for a few inches below the top lines of the canvas, but the rest, a barren waste. It is a pity if F. S. Kirkpatrick is encouraged by his friends to believe that such a meaningless performance as "In the Museum," is a work of art in any sense. It is an audacious travesty on the laborious if not very profound pictures of Alma Tadema, mingled with nightmare reminiscences of Turner. So clever a painter as Mr. De Haas ought to have made a more interesting picture out of the pretty "Harbor of Marblehead," and Mr. Quartley does himself no justice in either of his contributions. It is unfortunate that more artists did not see it to be their interest to send the best they could do in furtherance, not only of the cause of art among our people, but to uphold a committee determined, against no little opposition, to admit American pictures only.

CLARENCE COOK.





THE SALMAGUNDI EXHIBITION.

DRAWINGS BY MESSRS. SARONY, MURPHY, CHASE, EDWARDS, VOLKMAR, GREGORY AND EATON.

ARRANGED FOR THE ART AMATEUR BY F. M. GREGORY.